

Lies Of Our Times

AUGUST 1990

VOL. 1 NO. 8

\$2.50



**Anti-Arab
Bias Exposed**

**Media Trash
Environmentalists**

Times Watch:
Wines and Grusons
Excoriated

**Indonesia:
The Lies Continue**

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Cover: In occupied Gaza, Israeli soldier menaces Palestinian women breaking curfew to take sick child to the hospital.
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Odds and Ends

It was no accident the *New York Times* devoted little space to Nelson Mandela's visit. *New York Newsday* discovered that Executive Editor Max Frankel had not only ordered the limited coverage, but was bold enough to circulate a memo commending his editors for their "restraint." He also "got into a snit" when Mandela had to change the location of his meeting with *Times* editors; Frankel refused to attend ("Inside News," July 16, 1990, p. 11).

- *Newsday* should also be commended for covering (July 16, p. 13) the report of the Israeli human rights group, B'tselem, which accused soldiers in the occupied territories of "itchy trigger fingers" that have led to hundreds of needless Palestinian deaths." The *Times* gave so much space that day to the opening of the Richard M. Nixon Library in Yorba Linda, California, it evidently had no room to mention the first such report by an Israeli organization.

- Even the *New York Post* zapped the *Times* that week. They ran a piece (July 21, p. 4) on a *Times* item the previous day which carried the byline: "By FAKE BYLINE." According to a spokeswoman, this line keeps the computerized typesetting program working, and is deleted by presstime. Sure. We think this person has been writing for the *Times* for years.

- A brief item in the July 20 *Wall Street Journal* described the eight-year sentence, for stealing \$25 million in securities, of one Mario Rios Pinochet. The piece noted that the judge "rejected Mr. Pinochet's request to be released on bail pending appeal, citing the possibility that Mr. Pinochet, who has family in Chile and other countries, might flee the U.S." *LOOT* reader Alan McNichols wonders if there would have been more coverage if the man's name had been Mario Rios Castro.

- Talk about sophisticated PROAn investigation has begun in Sweden into the possible role of the CIA in the assassination of Prime Minister Olaf Palme. Another investigation has gotten under way in Italy into alleged CIA ties to rightwing terrorism. The CIA spokesman, quoted in the *WSJ* July 24, responded: "Absolute nonsense." And we were so sure they were going to admit it all.

-Michael Goodman, William Schaap, and Daniel Mintz

Lies Of Our Times

A Journal to Correct the Record

Published by
Sheridan Square Press, Inc.

Produced and Distributed by
Institute for Media Analysis, Inc.

145 West 4th Street
New York, NY 10012
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Lies Of Our Times, Volume 1, Number 8,
August 1990, copyright © 1990, by Sher-
idan Square Press, Inc., and Institute for
Media Analysis, Inc. All rights reserved.
ISSN: 1046-7912.

Lies Of Our Times (ISSN: 1046-7912) is published
monthly for \$24 per year by Sheridan Square Press,
Inc., 145 West 4th Street, New York, NY 10012. Sec-
ond-class postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMAS-
TER: Send address changes to *Lies Of Our Times*, 145
West 4th Street, New York, NY 10012.

To Our Readers

Lies Of Our Times is a magazine
of media criticism. "Our Times" are
the times we live in but also the
words of the *New York Times*, the
most cited news medium in the U.S.,
our paper of record. Our "Lies" are
more than literal falsehoods; they
encompass subjects that have been
ignored, hypocrisies, misleading
emphases, and hidden premises-
the biases which systematically
shape reporting. We can address
only a sampling of the universe of
media lies and distortions. But, we
hope *LOOT* will go a long way to-
ward correcting the record.

The Brenneke Trial

David MacMichael

The trial of Richard Brenneke, held April 24 to May 5 in Portland, Oregon, had enough solid news significance combined with tabloid sensationalism to have been the story of the month, maybe even the year. Funny, you could not read about it in the *New York Times*.

Consider: The U.S. government literally takes a man into court direct from a cardiac intensive care ward to try him on charges of having falsely stated in another federal proceeding the following: That he, as a CIA contract operative, had taken part in meetings in Paris in October 1980 at which representatives of the Reagan-Bush campaign - including campaign director, and later CIA chief, William Casey; later George Bush security aide, Iran-contra figure, and now controversial U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, Donald Gregg; campaign foreign policy head and later National Security Adviser to Ronald Reagan, Richard Allen; and, possibly, George Bush himself - had treacherously bribed Iran not to surrender the 52 U.S. Embassy hostages it held to President Jimmy Carter's negotiators in order to guarantee Ronald Reagan's election.

Brenneke was also charged with having testified falsely that he had been involved with Gregg in the purchase of Soviet Bloc weapons for use by the Nicaraguan contras and that Gregg himself had countenanced drugs for weapons deals as part of the contra support operation. Conviction on any of the five counts could have cost Brenneke five years in prison.

Among the witnesses were such newsworthies as Gregg himself and Richard Allen. Also testifying were ex-CIA officer turned Agency critic, Frank Snepp; Secret Service agents; Customs Service undercover men; former Casey employees; and assorted colorful and controversial characters from the clandestine world. Among 19 witnesses called by the defense, and one for whom district judge Malcolm F. Marsh would not allow government funds to be used to bring to court, was ex-President Jimmy Carter. The case had almost everything except Donald Trump.

A Sensational Acquittal

Given the seriousness of Brenneke's charges and the extraordinary (and almost inexplicable) efforts the government was making to discredit him through prosecution, one would have thought the trial merited close press attention during its conduct. And after the sensational acquittal by a jury that made no secret of its disbelief in the truthfulness of government witnesses, particularly Gregg, one would have expected that the verdict, at least, would have been major news and the subject of editorial comment, especially since it came on the heels of the conviction of Admiral John Poindexter.

The *Oregonian* of Portland, gave the story expected major play throughout, including daily comment by columnist Phil Stanford and a banner headline story on the acquittal (May 7,

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1990, p. B1). On May 5 and May 6, the Associated Press wire carried reports on the acquittal emphasizing the jurors' belief that the October 1980 meetings had taken place ("Jury Decides Brenneke Wasn't Lying," May 5; "Jury Foreman Says He Never Doubted Brenneke's Innocence," May 6). Many major newspapers ran all or part of these pieces, including the *Houston Post* in Bush's state of Texas. Perhaps the Houston paper, which has found it impossible to get its exposes of CIA *cum* organized-crime involvement in savings and loans failures reported in either the *Times* or the *Washington Post*, is just more credulous.

The *New York Times* did not mention the trial while it was in progress. On May 6, it ran a 300-word article on page 32 based on the AP story but under the ambiguous headline, "Man Cleared of Lying in Remarks on Reagan Aides and 52 Hostages." There has been no editorial or other follow-up, although on April 23 it had run a moronic Op-Ed by Daniel Schorr recommending that President Bush issue a blanket pardon for all involved in Iran-contra "as an act not of exoneration but of therapy" so that we can "get on with the pressing national problems of today."

Likewise, the *Washington Post* restricted itself to a paragraph on page A7 on May 6 stressing defense counsel Michael Scott's comment that the verdict did not mean the October 1980 treason had taken place, only that the jury had found Brenneke not guilty. In fact, the jurors, polled after the verdict, emphasized their total disbelief in the government witnesses, particularly CIA man Gregg with his years of practicing "deniability."

Peculiar Reticence

Considering the great amount of attention the *Post* devoted to Gregg's confirmation hearings only a few months earlier - where his truthfulness on Iran-contra and Bush's role therein was the central issue - this reticence is all the more peculiar.

The *Times* and the *Washington Post*, by their silence on the Brenneke trial and its implications (as well as their failure to report on a number of significant related trials going on in federal courts) may not exactly be lying, but they are not doing much to enlighten their readers, either.

Wide World Photos



Donald Gregg at confirmation hearings, June 1989. with the AP caption notes, "some Democrats suggesting he may be lying."

Photo Opportunities

The Privilege of Killing an Arab

Here is a photograph, printed in the *Jerusalem Post* for July 3, which accurately displays some of the more significant currents in Israeli politics today and which, therefore, would not run in a U.S. newspaper. Certainly not with any kind of accurate caption. The man on the far left is Yuval Ne'eman, science and energy minister in the new Shamir government. Ne'eman is a member of the Tehiya Party, which favors "transfer," i.e., deportation, of Palestinians from the territories and Gaza to Arab countries. No U.S. newspaper ever admits that there is a significant body of political opinion favoring mass expulsions of Arabs. Last November deputy foreign minister Binyamin Netanyahu said, as quoted in the journal *Hotam*, "Israel should have exploited the repression in China when world attention focused on that country to carry out mass expulsions among the Arabs of the territories. Regrettably, there was no support for this policy, which I put forward then and still recommend."

Israeli politicians like Netanyahu regularly say such things in Israel's Hebrew-language press, though not in the English-language *Jerusalem Post* and certainly not the U.S. press. Of course U.S. correspondents in Israel either read the Hebrew-language press or have it read to them, but take good care never to relay such frank remarks as Netanyahu's to their home desks.

The caption in the *Jerusalem Post* reads as follows: "Science and Energy Minister Yuval Ne'eman (far left) yesterday visits Rabbi Moshe Levinger (with beard), now serving a five-month

prison term for causing the death of a Hebron shopkeeper by negligence when he fired shots after his car was stoned. 'I am honoring a Jew who defended himself,' Ne'eman said. 'I did this before I was a minister and I see no reason to change because of my position.' "

So the photo displays a cabinet minister honoring a man serving five months for manslaughter. Levinger is one of the leading spirits of Gush Emunim, the fanatic settler group. The circumstances of the killing of the Palestinian shopkeeper were that Levinger's car was stoned. He drove on, then came upon a group of Israeli soldiers at a guard post, and urged them to open fire on Palestinians in the vicinity. They refused. Levinger then opened up with indiscriminate volleys himself.

After the sentencing he was an honored guest at an anniversary celebration at the West Bank settlement of Elkaana, having his hand warmly shaken by Israel's third-ranking military officer. President Chaim Herzog was also present on this occasion, hailing the settlers and referring to Palestinians round the settlement as foreigners.

It was after Levinger's sentence that Rabbi Moshe Neriya, described in *Ha'aretz* as "the most senior of the religious-national educators," said some words which caused a storm in Israel: "This is not the time to think, but rather the time to shoot [Arabs], right and left, as long as one disperses the murderers who rise against you." Soon thereafter Ami Popper went out in quasi-military garb, lined up Palestinian workers waiting by the road outside Rishon Le Zion, and killed seven and wounded ten.

Neriya's statement was widely denounced in Israel. Some Israeli journalists suggested that there was a direct link between Neriya's statement and what Popper did soon thereafter.

The day after Popper opened fire, Shulamit Hareven, a respected novelist and essayist, wrote in Israel's largest daily, *Yediot Ahronot*: "You, Moshe Tzvi Neriya, have allowed the shedding of the blood of the Arab day workers when you said that

'one should shoot right and left.'" The Israeli novelist Amos Oz said concerning Rabbi Neriya in a speech, quoted in the May 28 London *Independent*: "Not even during the worst battles, not even during Israel's most bitter wars, had anyone ever dared to preach that thinking ought to cease and be replaced by indiscriminate shooting 'left and right.' "

None of these events was described by any of the U.S. correspondents in Israel. I raised them in the *Wall Street Journal* May 24, June 14, and July 5, in the teeth of passionate denials of the facts by the well-known apologist for successive Israeli governments, Steven Emerson.



Dany Lev/Jerusalem Post

The *Times* Frames a Massacre

Nabeel Abraham

As soon as Ami Popper turned himself in to the police, Israeli authorities swung into action, framing the massacre of seven Palestinian workers at Rishon le Zion as the work of a lone, deranged person. The *New York Times* was only too ready to play along. Quoting police sources, the paper reported the next morning that "the first thing [the] youth said when arrested was that he did it because of an 'unrequited love affair.'" The paper added, "the man also said he had been sexually assaulted by an Arab when he was 13 years old, and that for years he had been seeking revenge" (Rick Black, "Lone Israeli Slays 7 Palestinians; 7 More Arabs Die as Riots Erupt," May 21, 1990, p. A1).

In a follow-up story on the widespread Palestinian protests triggered by the massacre, *Times* reporter Alan Cowell cited the views of Palestinians and Israelis who offered a different interpretation from the official line. "Palestinians," Cowell reported, "argued that the former soldier's actions reflected a climate created by the Israeli Government" - in the words of one Palestinian, "an atmosphere of racism and fascism so that such people can open fire" with impunity. Similar views were expressed by some Israeli Jews ("Violence Spreads to Israel in Wake of Arabs' Slayings," May 22, p. A1).

These views, however, went unexplored in subsequent reporting. Cowell, in fact, wrote a background story on the problems faced by *Israeli Arabs* for the next day's paper ("Israeli Arabs Talk of Identity Crisis," May 23, p. A4), but there was no mention of the climate of racism and hatred in Israel. The *Times* instead continued to toe the official line, juxtaposing the actions of a lone, deranged gunman to the "rioting" of Palestinian "mobs." In the week following the massacre (May 22-31), for example, the *Times* repeated the claim that Popper was "emotionally unstable" in eight news stories that mentioned the massacre in passing.

Six weeks later the *Times* ran a story under the heading, "Israeli Held in Massacre Says He Sought Revenge for Rape," (June 29, p. A2). The unsigned story centered on Popper's purported jailhouse "confession." The confession, the *Times* observed, indicated "the massacre was a premeditated act of personal revenge for a gang rape he suffered at the age of 12 [sic]." Popper had decided "to settle the score" with the leader of the gang, who allegedly was "among the Arabs he attacked on May 20." (On May 21 the *Times* reported that Popper had told police his "assailant" had not been among the men at Rishon le Zion.)

The *Times* story appeared to accept Popper's dubious confession and his purported motive, leaving open to speculation his exact state of mind. But what of the climate of anti-Arab racism and hatred that was alluded to by Palestinians and Israelis in Cowell's May 22 story? The *Times* dismissed all such discussion by noting that "nothing in the rambling jailhouse ac-

Wide World Photos



The bodies of two of the seven Palestinian workers killed at Rishon le Zion are taken away.

count written in Hebrew by the gunman suggests that hatred of Arabs or Israeli nationalism was behind the shooting spree that left 7 dead and 15 wounded" (June 29).

There is an obvious problem with this conclusion: Why would someone with a personal vendetta round up two dozen men (all unknown to him), order them to kneel in rows, calmly check their identity papers, and then fire approximately 100 rounds at them? Perhaps this was the work of a truly deranged person, as the *Times* and most U.S. commentators contended. The incident, nevertheless, invites an examination of Israeli society, not the mere relaying of the lugubrious words of Israeli officials. For example, did the authorities immediately seal Popper's house and slate it for demolition as is routine when a Palestinian is suspected of harming Jews? Are Palestinian murder suspects sent for psychiatric examination as Popper was? Are extenuating circumstances taken into consideration in the case of the Palestinians? Has the Israeli army ever fired at "rioting mobs" of angry Jews, killing scores and wounding hundreds?

The *Times* avoids such delicate questions. It prefers to project an image of Israel as a democratic and western country (*i.e.*, modern, rational, secular). Questions about deep-seated racism and the struggle against it within Israeli society would only raise the specter of South African-style apartheid; hence the silence. It is therefore instructive to contrast the *Times's* coverage of the Rishon le Zion massacre with the coverage of the Israeli Hebrew-language press.

The Israeli Press

Hours after the early morning massacre, Israeli reporter Yigal Sarna visited the killing field, universally known as the "slave market," except to the *New York Times*, where this revealing fact was suppressed. Sarna witnessed an Israeli man get out of his car and jubilantly dance on the blood-stained ground, asking rhetorically, "Why only seven?" ("On the Pool of Blood," *Yediot Ahronot*, May 21). The question was a common one in

Israel, as Sarna and other Israeli reporters discovered.

On a visit to the gunman's neighborhood, located only a short walk from the scene of the massacre, Sarna found Popper's friends were in agreement that he "had made only two mistakes: One, he didn't kill all [of the Arabs] who were there; and two, he turned himself in instead of making a run for it."

About Popper's allegation that he had been raped, his friends admitted, "'Ami had never mentioned it.'" Sarna concluded that the rape story was merely a rumor that was "immediately blown up into an excuse, a vindication for the entire incident" ("He is Our Israeli Hero," *Yediot Ahronot*, May 25).

Experts like Dr. Dvora Carmiel of the Institute for the Study of States of Stress at Haifa University were consulted. Carmiel told Sarna:

The massacre has received broad support and expresses the social norms current in the murderer's environment. ... In America a man takes a gun and opens fire in a supermarket or from a tower at passers-by. Here the targets are all marked. Popper chose to kill Arabs and not members of his family, a girlfriend who let him down, or himself.

On the *Times* Op-Ed page, Uriel Savir, Israel's Consul General in New York, assured readers that "Israel's soul was numbed by the brutal attack in Rishon le Zion.... This revolting murder sent shock waves throughout the country, bringing an outpouring of sympathy" ("An Arab Choir of Hate," June 1, p. A29). Israeli journalists drew different conclusions about the views of their countrymen. Visiting four Tel Aviv schools in the wake of the massacre, reporter Ya'el Fishbain found students mostly supportive of Popper, with a minority opposed (*Davar*, May 25). Similarly, Aviramah Golan visited a Jerusalem kindergarten the day after the massacre and listened in horror as "some of the more outspoken children said that it was a shame [Popper] hadn't killed more Arabs and that in general they should all be thrown into the sea" (*Davar Supplement*, May 25). On the positive side, many Israelis volunteered blood and other forms of assistance. The Palestinian weekly *Al-Fajr* (May 28) reported several Arab-Jewish demonstrations occurred in several cities. The *Times* mentioned one (May 22).

Unlike the *Times*, Israeli writers had no qualms about linking the massacre to the country's political climate. Sylvie Keshet pointed out that while Israeli leaders condemned the murders, "Jewish murders receive pardons and privileges." Imprisoned members of the Jewish terrorist underground were allowed to attend seaside picnics. A Jewish woman who murdered an Arab taxi driver chosen at random received a presidential pardon because of poor health. "Meanwhile Arab 'terrorists' whose health is deteriorating continue to rot in prison," Keshet observed (*Yediot Ahronot*, May 25).

None of this information found its way onto the pages of the journal of record, although it could scarcely have gone unnoticed by *Times* reporters, who quote the Israeli press when it suits their needs. Some appeared in Alexander Cockburn's *Wall Street Journal* column (and elsewhere) as part of an exchange with Steven Emerson that spanned nearly seven weeks. Emerson had asserted that Israel's "instant, unanimous condemnation of the killings" reflected the country's "values and con-

science" (*Wall Street Journal*, May 22, p. A20). The *Times* also tried to make the same point, but in its own inimitable way. _

Double Standards

Jonathan Scott and Rashid Taher

To compare the *New York Times's* treatment of the Palestinian raid of May 30, 1990, with its reporting on Israel's October 1985 bombing of PLO headquarters in Tunis, is to reveal a systemic double standard.

Discussing the Palestinian incursion, the *Times* used an *accusatory* frame of reference, not mentioning the possibility that the action could have been in response to provocations. The sources cited are U.S. and Israeli officials, not Palestinians. In the case of the Tunis bombing, even though a large number of innocent bystanders were killed, the *Times* used an *apologetic* frame, with stress on legitimate reasons for the attack, which was presumed to be a response, and with hardly a word about the innocent victims. The sources tapped to evaluate the attack were, once again, U.S. and Israeli officials.

In Thomas Friedman's June 1, 1990, article, "Arafat Denies PLO Tie to Raid But His Mild Stand Troubles U.S." (p. A1), the onus was put on Yasir Arafat for failing to "deplore the operation or to take any action against the PLO faction involved." A recent wave of Israeli atrocities against Palestinian civilians was never mentioned. Instead the *Times* framed the incident as simply another unprovoked act of Palestinian terrorism and thus, by definition, indefensible.

The *Times* does not accept the notion that Palestinians might have some right to resist harsh military occupation. Consequently it points the accusing finger only at Arafat and the PLO ("Whose Terror Teams, Mr. Arafat?" June 1, 1990, p. A16), relieving Israel—an occupying power, after all—of all responsibility for the escalation of violence.

Friedman lets the U.S. serve as official investigator. The essence of the message to the PLO, he explains, is that "You, Arafat, can't keep hiding behind this argument that you or Fatah are not personally involved" in the terrorist raid (p. A12). The only issue is the precise and immediate responsibility for this act



One of the May 30 raiders who survived, captured by the Israelis, with his hands tied and a sack over his head.

of terror. Comparable and worse Israeli acts of violence, including those that kill innocent people, are merely part of the normal environment; the locus of responsibility does not arise.

The 1985 Israeli Bombing

The *Times* consistently fails to condemn acts of Israeli state terrorism or acts perpetrated by pro-Israeli zealots and neither questions nor criticizes the U.S. for legitimizing Israeli terrorism. Israel's October 1985 bombing of Tunis, for example, which killed 72 civilians and wounded hundreds more, elicited no editorial comment from the *Times*. The U.S. had come out in support of the air strike, pronouncing the bombing a "legitimate response" against "terrorist attacks" (*New York Times*, October 2, 1985, p. A1).

All news coverage of the Tunis bombing was accompanied by statements from U.S. State Department officials and Israeli leaders claiming the air strike was justified because it discouraged PLO terrorism. The *Times* informed us, for example, that the Israeli bombing was designed "to put a 'return address' on Palestinian violence" (October 2, 1985, p. A8). Despite the numerous civilian victims of the Israeli raid, the *Times* focused on a "new wave" of Palestinian violence against Israelis, "which appears to have been directed by the Palestine Liberation Organization" (October 3, 1985, p. A1). The highlight of this piece was Friedman's observation that even if moderate Palestinian leaders publicly condemn military strikes against Israel, they privately "cheer the attackers on."

If this were not enough, the *Times* put on the same page a separate piece on terrorism headed, "Israel Calls Bombing a Warning to Terrorists," which provided Israeli leaders an uncontested opportunity to defend the action. Top Israeli officials were quoted 11 times in the 525-word article; every statement included some reference to PLO terrorism, and stressed the important effectiveness of the "retaliatory" strike.

In contrast, Friedman framed the attempted Palestinian raid of June 1 without any reference to increased Israeli violence against Palestinian civilians. He did not mention the massacre of seven Palestinian workers in Israel ten days earlier, or the 27 Palestinians killed and over one thousand wounded by Israeli troops during the week between the massacre and the Palestinian raid. The possibility that Palestinian attacks might put a "return address" on Israeli violence is never suggested.

By ignoring this week of Israeli violence, the *Times* also relieved Israel of responsibility for undermining any progress in peace negotiations. Israel's commitment to peace is presupposed while the PLO has yet to prove itself. Hence, at the top of the June 1 article Friedman quoted a U.S. administration official saying, "This was a real opportunity for Arafat to send a signal to Israelis that he is truly committed to a moderate approach. Once again, it's an opportunity missed."

And once again Friedman and the *Times* neither question Israel's commitment to peace nor criticize Israel's role in instigating violence. It seems a given that Israel has taken the steps necessary for a place at the peace table, and that no act of Israeli aggression will jeopardize this or qualify as terrorism. •

Jonathan Scott and Rashid Taher are undergraduate students at the University of Michigan. For a discussion of later coverage of this incident, see Noam Chomsky's column, which follows.

Noam Chomsky

Letter From Lexington

July 18, 1990

Dear LOOT,

"There's No Tolerating Terror," the *New York Times* editors admonished the Bush administration, then wrestling with its painful responsibilities as guardian of international morality after a failed guerrilla operation by a PLO faction (Editorial, June 13, 1990, p. A30). The administration had already announced that the U.S. would never "countenance terrorism," but it was still hoping to keep the "peace process" alive, despite this proof of PLO iniquity (Thomas L. Friedman, "Baker Seeks to Avoid Breaking Off PLO Talks," *New York Times*, June 9, 1990, p. A3). Columnist Anthony Lewis, regularly denounced for his pro-Palestinian bias, warned Arafat that "the time for fudging has run out": No terrorist should be permitted "on the executive committee of an organization committed to negotiation and peace with Israel" ("Arafat to Choose," June 5, 1990, p. A29).

Though it is uplifting to watch the *Times* persist in its inspiring crusade to ensure that its adversaries adhere to the principles of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.—whose names are regularly invoked in lectures to the Mandelas and the Arafats who have not reached our lofty pinnacles in this regard—nevertheless some flickers of uncertainty remain.

In his advice to Arafat, Lewis states that "Palestinians can make political progress only by convincing Israel of their desire for negotiation and peace." The assumption is that Israel desires such an outcome, but is deterred by Palestinian intransigence. The facts, however, are quite different. Egyptian president Sadat's offer of a full peaceful settlement was not considered until after the 1973 war had revealed that the post-1947 triumphalism of Israel and its U.S. patron was built on sand. Israel withdrew from most of Lebanon only when violent resistance raised the costs too high. When the population of the territories seemed quiescent under the brutal military regime, there was no thought of compromise there. From the early days of the Zionist movement, Arab moderation has been regarded as more of a threat than Arab militancy. Both political groupings in Israel have always been firmly opposed to meaningful negotiations with Palestinians, and the "peace process" that they and Washington advance is founded on the clear and explicit rejection of Palestinian national rights. These facts being unacceptable, the media have been careful not to make public the actual terms of the Peres-Shamir-Baker plan, even though it is described as the only game in town.

Let us put all this aside, however, and turn to terrorism, beginning with a conceptual point. What is it? Two different responses are relevant in the present connection: international conventions and what we may call "the South African exception." The first is given clearly in the U.N. General Assembly resolution of December 1987 condemning terrorism in all its forms, while stating that "the struggle for self-determination, freedom, and independence" against "colonial or racist regimes" or "foreign occupation" does not fall under the rubric



Yasir Arafat at meeting with Israeli journalists in Egypt, arranged by Israeli peace campaigner Abie Nathan.

of terrorism. The South African exception rejects this clause. On this issue, world opinion is divided. The UN. resolution passed 153 to 2, with the U.S. and Israel opposed (Honduras abstaining). Such facts pass without report, it being understood, across the spectrum, that the world is once again out of step.

Also unmentioned is that it is precisely this issue that lies behind the solemn deliberations about granting the PLO entry to the "dialogue"—in reality a monologue in which these miscreants are granted the right to listen to U.S. demands that they quietly fade away. PLO acceptance of the international convention has been angrily denounced as "the old Arafat hedge," by the *Times* editors (Editorial, November 16, 1988, p. A30), with Anthony Lewis, again at the dissident extreme, calling on Arafat to prove his seriousness by affirming the South African exception with greater clarity ("Include Us Out," December 1, 1988, p.A35).

Let us adopt the party line on this matter too, and proceed. Recalling that terrorists must be rigorously excluded from the PLO executive, we naturally ask whether the same injunction applies to Israel; it would be too much to expect a question to be raised about the United States itself. The terrorist career of Prime Minister Shamir extends back half a century. Another notorious terrorist in his cabinet is Ariel Sharon, who does, in fact, figure in *New York Times* thoughts on the topic—as an expert in how to combat the plague (see Sharon's Op-Ed, "It's Past Time to Crush The Terrorist Monster," September 30, 1986, p.A35). Sharon does not lack experience. He has been organizing terrorist atrocities since the early 1950s, including his "regime of indiscriminate terror" in Gaza in 1971 (Amnon Danker, *Hadashot*, April 11, 1989), to mention one example relevant to the current version of these practices supervised by the U.S. favorites.

But let us put these hesitations aside as well, removing from the agenda the mounting wave of sadistic repression and totalitarian rule in the territories, recorded in the Israeli press and human rights reports, but scarcely visible to those who pay the bills.

Another question is raised by Robert Fisk, the veteran Brit-

ish Lebanon correspondent. "More than 100 people were killed in Israeli air raids on Lebanon last year, many of them civilians," he writes. "Palestinians might be forgiven for asking why President Bush does not break off relations with Israel when it bombs a Palestinian camp in Lebanon. But the PLO knows this would have been outside the bounds of political reality" (*Independent*, June 25, 1990). These terrorist attacks are north of Israel's "security zone" in Lebanon, where the harsh repression by Israel's terrorist mercenary army (the SLA) backed by Israeli force is also off the American agenda. We therefore need not tarry on the bombardment of market places, schools, and hospitals, the torture and sieges to deprive recalcitrant villagers of sustenance, the early morning raids by Israeli troops to expel women and children from villages that refuse to submit to the rule of the chosen collaborators, and other atrocities condemned by the Norwegian U.N. forces, who vainly try to protect

the inhabitants, as "inhuman acts" that are reminiscent of methods used by the Nazis, to mention a few cases from the period when every word of Arafat's was being closely scrutinized to see if he could be admitted to a "dialogue" (for details, see my *Necessary Illusions*, pp. 192 ff.). The story continues, with no question raised about the entry ticket of the U.S. client state to negotiations or its qualifications for a huge subsidy.

No contradiction is stark enough to disturb the equanimity of the judges of good behavior. Thus a front-page story by Robert Pear in the *Times* March 1, 1989 ("Halt Raids on Israel Or Put Ties at Risk, U.S. Tells the PLO"), reports a U.S. warning to the PLO that the "dialogue" will be endangered unless the PLO adheres rigorously to the South African exception. "Attacks against Israeli civilian or military targets inside or outside of Israel are contrary to the peaceful objectives of the dialogue," State Department spokesman Charles Redman announced (p. A7), referring to an incident in southern Lebanon in which three Palestinian guerrillas were killed. "The PLO cannot escape responsibility" the U.S. Ambassador in Tunis warned the PLO, Redman said. On the same day, a brief story by Ishan A. Hijazi ("Israeli Bomb Hits Lebanon School," p. A6) reports that Israeli jets bombed Palestinian targets near Beirut, killing three people and wounding 22 schoolchildren when a missile hit a schoolyard. "Panicked children aged four to ten, some with blood streaming down their faces, ran screaming and sobbing from the school," AP reported (February 28, 1989), adding that five were critically injured. No warnings were issued to Israel, though there was a U.S. reaction. Charles Redman stated that "this latest sequence of actions and reaction in south Lebanon underscores once again the need for agreed-on security arrangements" (Reuters, March 1, 1989). The *Times* editors issued no stern admonitions, and saw no incongruities.

So matters continue. A few weeks later, Israeli planes killed 20 people in a farming community east of Beirut, including an entire Lebanese family buried under the rubble and other civilians (*Washington Post*, March 21, 1989, p. A15; *New York Times*, March 21, 1989, p. A6). In October, the SLA expelled 28 Lebanese from Israel's "security zone" because three of their

relatives had defected from the mercenary force (AP, October 25, 1989). In December, SLA gunners shelled the market town of Nabatiyeh, killing three civilians and wounding nine (AP, December 2, 1989). In February of this year, Israeli warplanes attacked Palestinian targets near Sidon, with a second attack as casualties were evacuated, the usual tactic (AP, February 19, 1990). The purpose was to deter actions against Israeli troops in southern Lebanon, the army announced. Further raids in July received some attention, perhaps because they "raised fears that reported plans for the release of a western hostage held here could be delayed," Hijazi reported (*New York Times*, July 10, 1990, p. A11).

In an article on the hostages ("For the Captors, Less In Common With Iran," April 24, 1990), Friedman reported that some were abducted "in order to get a third party, Israel, to free more than 300 Lebanese Shiites being held in prisons in south Lebanon" and others. A Shiite Muslim leader who had played a role in the release of Robert Polhill added that freeing these prisoners was "essential" for any further progress on the hostages (AP, April 25, 1990). Meanwhile the British press reported on the worst of these prisons, the horror chamber at Khiam (Ansar I) established during the invasion of Lebanon and used since to punish people suspected of anti-Israel activity in Lebanon or their relatives, some held for five years according to U.N. records, after having been brought there by Israeli Shin Beth agents. Local inhabitants believe that the purpose is "to inspire terror in the local Lebanese population" - with considerable success, Robert Fisk reports (*Independent*, April 20, 1990). Neither the International Red Cross nor any other humanitarian organization has been allowed to visit Khiam, but there is ample evidence of hideous conditions and savage torture of inmates by Israel's proxies under Israeli supervision, according to numerous independent and consistent testimonies. Julie Flint, reporting a separate inquiry (*Observer*, May 13, 1990), adds that "the prison is at last getting international attention [outside the United States, that is] because Iran has linked the release of Khiam's inmates to the continued freeing of western hostages" - a story that matters.

U.S. Clients Can't Be Terrorists

It would be misleading simply to accuse the U.S. government and media of a double standard in ignoring Israel's terrorist operations while bitterly condemning any action against Israeli military targets, even in Lebanon. Rather, we must understand that the South African exception is complemented by a deeper principle. Terrorist acts by the United States and its clients are automatically excluded from the canon. Once the terminology is understood, we see that a single standard prevails.

On the same grounds, we can understand why the chief diplomatic correspondent of the *New York Times* should approve of Israel's performance in Lebanon. Shortly after receiving his Pulitzer Prize for Middle East reporting, Thomas Friedman, in interviews in Israel, offered south Lebanon as a model for the occupied territories. But he did add that the Palestinians should be granted some crumbs, because "only if you give the Palestinians something to lose is there a hope that they will agree to moderate their demands," abandoning the ludicrous hope for mutual recognition in a two-state settlement — a "demand" that

Friedman refused to report and consistently denied while producing the "balanced and informative coverage" for which he received the prize. "I believe that as soon as Ahmed has a seat in the bus, he will limit his demands," Friedman added. (See Israeli coverage in *Yediot Ahronot*, April 7, 1988, and in *Hotam*, April 15, 1988.)

One might ask what the reaction would be if a prominent journalist urged South Africans to "give Sambo a seat in the bus," or proposed that Jews be granted something to lose, because "if you give Hymie a seat in the bus, he may limit his demands." Promotion to chief diplomatic correspondent, perhaps?

Sincerely,
Noam

Ignoring Zaire

Jane Hunter

The *New York Times* national edition carried a small Reuters story from Belgium on May 25, 1990: Diplomats were investigating reports that Zairian troops had killed "dozens of students." Although the details at the time were murky, the horrifying massacre at the University of Lubumbashi on May 12 was subsequently investigated and verified - but not thanks to the *New York Times*, which has steadfastly ignored the story - and did not, in fact, run the Reuters item in its regular early or late editions.

The attack, by at least 200 members of the *division spectate présidentielle* (DSP), President Mobutu Sese Seko's Israeli-trained palace guard, occurred after students had uncovered four military agents on campus and, under questioning, heard them confess that they had already murdered 23 "student agitators," according to *Africa Confidential* (AC), the intelligence-connected London newsletter (June 15, 1990, p.1).

After the university's electricity was cut off, AC continued, the DSP agents entered the campus and hunted down their victims. Amnesty International said 50-150 students were killed - with machetes and bayonets (Associated Press, May 24, 1990). The drivers who removed the bodies have disappeared and parents have been ordered not to claim their children's bodies or wear mourning, AC reported.

According to the Associated Press (June 18, 1990), a Zairian parliamentary panel - established after Belgium froze cooperation with Zaire - determined that the massacre was "premeditated and meticulously prepared."

When it comes to Zaire, the *Times* and the Bush administration have been right in step with each other. First, even as Zaire moved to try a number of officials involved in the slayings, the administration said it could not confirm them. Then it said that the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa had determined that only one or two students were killed, according to AP. Both the *Times* and the administration have ignored congressional efforts to cut aid to Zaire.

In contrast, in a June 21 dispatch - which led with the news that the House Appropriations Committee had voted to cut off



Mobutu Sese Seko

Zaire's military aid—AP noted the Zairian panel's conclusion that the governor of Shaba Province had authorized the massacre.

The only glimmers in the *Times* blackout on Zaire were a passing mention of Mobutu's "appetite for repression" in a June 5 editorial urging support for African moves to pluralism and a letter, published June 19, from Ed Ferguson, executive secretary of the Association of Concerned African Scholars, who cited the Lubumbashi massacre and "reports from elsewhere in the country [that] note increasing government violence against those who voice support for democratization" as grounds for a suspension of U.S. aid to Zaire. In contrast to the "full coverage" of the European press, wrote Ferguson, the U.S. media and government "stand silent."

Perhaps it is coincidental that the *Times* is ignoring Zaire at the very time that the administration is trying to get increased funds—an additional \$10-15 million over last year's estimated \$50 million, according to the *Washington Post* (June 18, 1990)—for the CIA's war against Angola. The CIA uses bases in Zaire to supply and train the Angolan proxy force Unita,

Since 1985, when it repealed the Clark Amendment, barring the CIA from working to overthrow Angola, Congress has let the administration have money for that and aid to Zaire to reward Mobutu's cooperation, with most members ignoring the widespread jokes calling Zaire a kleptocracy and reports that Mobutu has diverted billions of aid dollars to foreign bank accounts. But this spring, after Jesse Jackson and other prominent African-Americans directed an intensive lobbying campaign at congressional Democrats, Rep. Ronald Dellums (Dem.-Calif.) and other legislators began to organize opposition to any aid to Unita.

On April 26 the *Times* ran an article headlined "Angola Railway Attacks Hit the Starving Hardest" (p. A3). The piece played heavily on a vignette about hungry bandits holding up a railroad train, suggesting that these marauders (and drought) had put 782,000 at serious risk of starvation, whereas for years the real saboteur of Angola's infrastructure has been Unita. That Unita is now stepping up its disruption of transportation lifelines and

ambushing relief convoys was mentioned incidentally, its attribution unclear, far down in the story.

Several paragraphs of a small accompanying story quoted President José Eduardo dos Santos saying Angola would reopen peace talks with Unita, which were launched last summer by Mobutu but quickly disintegrated under his heavy hand.

It was not until July 4 that the paper returned to the famine theme, this time to relay a propaganda blast from the State Department: "Angola Rejects Rebel Relief-Aid Plan" (p. 2). Meanwhile, the foreign media reported on Angola's charges that the U.S., Zaire, and Israel were preparing a coup d'état against it. The June 18 *Washington Post* report said that emergency military aid from the U.S. this spring had helped Unita turn back an Angolan assault only miles away from its headquarters.

The July 4 *Times* article scoffed at Angola's suspicions that Washington might use food convoys as a cover for arms shipments to Unita. But it did point out that one of the causes of hunger in Unita-controlled areas was that South Africa, which pledged to stop arming Unita as part of the 1988 accords freeing Namibia, has stopped delivering seeds.

Four Reporters for One Continent

Part of the *New York Times's* problem—whatever part is not political—is logistical. Despite cataclysmic changes occurring on the continent it has only four reporters covering Africa (one each for East Africa, West Africa, the Maghreb, and South Africa). The last story that Kenneth Noble, who covers West Africa, filed from Zaire appeared in the *Times* on May 2. Recently he has been in Liberia to cover the terminal stages of its civil war.

Since its Washington staff has covered the administration's reaction to the imminent loss of President Samuel Doe, one of its best African clients, the *Times* might as well have relied on wire service reports from Liberia, which have been indistinguishable from Noble's. Meanwhile, it has neglected to cover ongoing challenges to the governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon, incipient ferment in Sierra Leone, the aftermath of an attempted coup in Nigeria, and significant political developments in a number of other countries.

Jane Perlez, the *Times's* East Africa correspondent, has also been overwhelmed. It took her several days to get to Zambia after protests over food price increases and a (bogus) coup d'état at the end of June brought that country to the brink of chaos. Then she had to rush back to Kenya, where the government was arresting leading advocates of multi-party democracy and clashing violently with their supporters in the streets.

Of course, if the *Times* had more reporters in Africa, it would also have more opportunities to slip in bits of analysis like its explanation for Zambia's problem: "The doubling of the price of corn meal was an inevitability given Zambia's large international debt..." (Jane Perlez, "In Zambia, Anger Over the Economy," July 4, 1990). That is a rather disingenuous approach for a paper so closely linked to the very establishment whose bankers and ideologues have mandated the "inevitability" of price hikes and hunger by insisting that borrower countries establish market economies. Maybe it is better, after all, that the *Times* exposes so few of its reporters to the rigors of Africa. •

Murder Will Out

William Worthy

The CIA's role in the 1965 slaughter of up to one million Indonesians is making the news again. The rampage by the Indonesian military a quarter century ago earned the label "the silent slaughter" because of grossly delayed and systematically underplayed reporting in the western media.

As recapitulated by Michael Wines ("CIA Tie Asserted in Indonesia Purge," *New York Times*, July 12, 1990, p. A13), the generally accepted version of the 1965 events is that "General Suharto, now Indonesia's president, took control of the Government in October 1965, days after Communist insurgents launched an unsuccessful coup and killed six senior military officials. His army later encouraged and joined in a nationwide massacre of known and suspected Communists, which the CIA has said claimed 250,000 lives before it ended in early 1966."

Perpetuating Lies

This brief encapsulation perpetuates lies which have been bruited about for 25 years. First, there is the matter of the "unsuccessful communist coup." In *Indonesia- The Second Greatest Crime of the Century* (New York: World View Publishers, 1970), Deirdre Griswold pointed to the dictionary definition of "coup d'etat" as the sudden, forceful overthrow of a government, and wrote (p. 2), "Since the events of September-October 1965, every person who was a member of the Cabinet on the night of September 30 has been accused of participating in the coup; three were sentenced to death and all were arrested. ... Former President Sukarno himself has been placed under house arrest for interrogation about his part in the alleged coup attempt." But a government, Griswold points out, "can hardly be accused of plotting *its own overthrow*" (emphasis added).

Then there is the question of the "insurgents" killing the senior military officials. What really happened was that Sukar-

no (convener of the first Afro-Asian summit conference, and host in Jakarta to numerous liberation movement bureaus) had long been on a collision course with Washington and with powerful segments of his U'Si-trained military hierarchy. In September 1965, there was growing jockeying for power among different groups of generals, and the most conservative, allied with General Suharto, plotted to remove the more progressive. In the fighting which ultimately broke out, six members of the Council of Generals were indeed killed. Soon, however, the pro-Sukarno and progressive forces were crushed. This was not, as the *Times* would have it, an unsuccessful leftwing coup; it was a successful, and incredibly bloody, rightwing coup.

As early as June 1966, Lord Bertrand Russell heaped scorn on the "uniform" western press accounts "from Washington to Bonn" of an "abortive 'communist' coup which had been overcome by loyal army officers" (Preface to *The Silent Slaughter*, proceedings of a public inquest held at Columbia University, June 2, 1966, p. 3). "In Jakarta," Lord Russell wrote, "few had any doubt about what was taking place around them. The United States Seventh fleet was in Javanese waters. The largest base in the area [in the Philippines] was ordered 'on alert.' General Nasution [one of the coup leaders] had a mission in Washington. The United States was directly involved in the day-to-day events."

Slow Motion Press

As Griswold notes, October, November, and half of December passed before any story of the mass slaughter taking place in Indonesia broke into the American press. On December 17, 1965, *Time* magazine ran an item (p. 29); on January 13, 1966, the *Times* had a front-page piece by its then London bureau chief Anthony Lewis. The headline read, "100,000 Dead Listed in Indonesian Purge."

Two months later, on March 13, *Times* readers learned from correspondent Max Frankel that the Johnson administration "found it difficult to hide its delight with the news." And on June 19, James Reston sought nationalistic solace from major U.S. setbacks in Vietnam ("A Gleam of Light in Asia," p. E12):

UPI/Bettmann



Suspected communist sympathizer is questioned at gunpoint, November 1965, during the aftermath of the coup, in which about one million died.

The savage transformation of Indonesia from a pro-Chinese policy under Sukarno to a defiantly anti-communist policy under General Suharto is, of course the most important of these [Asian political] developments. Washington is careful not to claim any credit for this change in the sixth most populous and one of the richest nations in the world, but this does not mean that Washington had nothing to do with it.

There was a great deal more contact between the anti-communist forces in that country and at least one very high official in Washington before and during the Indonesian massacre than is generally realized.

Frankel noted that the U.S. retained "excellent contacts with the top military leaders, even after Mr. Sukarno had renounced American aid and had

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begun to move against American information libraries, the Peace Corps, and news correspondents."

Despite these and other veiled references to CIA involvement in the Indonesian military's "root and branch" massacre of men, women, and children, it took until the spring of 1990 for the fully documented story to be published- first in the small, courageous Spartanburg, South Carolina, *Herald-Journal* (circulation 60,000) on May 19; then in the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *Washington Post* on May 20; and then, on May 23, in the *Boston Globe* and several other dailies- but not in the *New York Times*.

After nine years of lonely, indefatigable, and poorly funded digging, Kathy Kadane of States News Service in Washington got half a dozen unrepentant former CIA and State Department officials- including former CIA director William Colby and former U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia Marshall Green- to admit in varying degrees that a group of embassy, State Department and CIA officials spent two years systematically compiling "comprehensive lists of Communist operatives from the top echelons down to village cadres." The names were turned over to the Indonesian Army, "which hunted down the leftists and killed them." "No one cared, so long as they were Communists, that they were being butchered," according to Howard Feder-spiel, who was the State Department's Indonesia specialist in the bureau of intelligence and research (*Boston Globe*, May 23, 1990, p. 19). Nearly two months later, as noted above, the *Times* caught up with the story. But it was only an effort to discredit the piece- an effort that was an abject failure- except, of course, for those who read only the *Times*. •

Damage Control At the *Times*

Ellen Ray and William H. Schaap

How the mighty have fallen. It took the Central Intelligence Agency two months to persuade the *New York Times* to take on a damage-control campaign against Kathy Kadane's exposure of the Agency's role in the bloody 1%5 coup in Indonesia. Time was when the paper would have been on its hind legs and barking in a matter of days.

Press critic Doug Ireland ("Bali Hoo," *Village Voice*, July 25, 1990, p. 7) accurately described Michael Wines's piece ("CIA Tie Asserted in Indonesia Purge," July 12, 1990, p. A13) as nothing but "an attempt to discredit Kadane's scoop, the result of 10 years of investigations on her part." And he touched on two of the most scandalous lies by Wines: the description of John Hughes- whose comments conclude the very long article, completely dismissing Kadane's thesis- as an "observer removed

Chris Vacek, a *LOOT* intern, assisted in the research for this series of articles on Indonesia. The State News Service release of the Kathy Kadane interview transcripts, as well as a longer piece by Ralph McGehee, will appear in the fall issue of *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, P.O. Box 34583, Washington, DC 20043.

from the controversy," and the assertion that Kadane's interview transcripts "appear ambiguous."

Who Is John Hughes?

In partial observer John Hughes did cover Indonesia for the *Christian Science Monitor* in 1%5. His patriotic coverage won the Pulitzer Prize, and was the basis for one of the worst white-washes of the U.S. role imaginable, *Indonesian Upheaval* (New York: David McKay, 1%7). He then went to work for the United States Information Agency, became head of the Voice of America, and went into the Reagan State Department as a PR spokesman. Just your everyday impartial *Times* source.

Hughes described Kadane's conclusions to Michael Wines as "pretty far out." He said the Indonesian Army did not need any help from the U.S., and it "boggles the mind that the embassy would need to be giving out lists." The following passage (p. 289) gives the tenor of his book:

From this painful period, Indonesia's new leaders have emerged with justifiable pride in one thing: Indonesians themselves purged their country of Communism. They had no outside help, made no plea to Washington for an expeditionary force, or the Seventh Fleet. In the days when the outcome hung in the balance, direct American intervention or involvement would have been an embarrassment and hindrance to the new leaders, undermining their position and giving credence to Communist charges that they were instruments of the West.

The anti-Communist campaign in Indonesia succeeded not in spite of American nonintervention, but perhaps because of it. In fairness to Washington, it must be said that the State Department saw this as readily as did Indonesians themselves. In this situation there was to be no American tub-thumping. If the United States really wanted to help, went the analysis, it would keep quiet. And it did.

Note how Hughes glosses over the murder of hundreds of thousands of civilians. How objective would Wines characterize a writer who said Pol Pot should be justifiably proud of having purged Cambodia of western collaborators? And Kadane's notes make clear that the U.S. Embassy *was* deeply involved in helping the new government, and every major U.S. official there was witting, including the then Ambassador, Marshall Green,

Nothing Ambiguous

Wines described Kadane's notes as "ambiguous on the central accusation: that Mr. Green and others approved releasing to the Indonesians a list of Communist Party members." Kadane asked Green if it was true that "apparently everybody in the em-

Wide World Photos



Former President Sukarno.
Plotted against himself?



President Suharto, "justifiably proud" of his "purge."

Green replied: "Well, I wouldn't gainsay it. In other words, if he said that were so, I would agree with it. I told you I couldn't remember all these things." Wines described the exchange like

bassy knew about this list," and he replied, "Yeah, that's right." She asked him if it was true that the decision to "disseminate the names to an [Indonesian] army emissary was made by a group of you, yourself, the [CIA] station chief, Hugh Tovar, Ed [Masters, the political section chief] himself, the defense attaché [Willis Ethel], and Jack Lydman [Green's deputy]." Green answered, "Yeah." This may be informal, but it is not ambiguous.

It is Wines who distorts the transcripts. When Kadane asked Green about the details of these discussions, and said that Ed Masters remembered them,

this: "When Ms. Kadane said that others had confirmed it, he replied, 'Well, I wouldn't gainsay it,' and added, 'I told you I couldn't remember it.' "

Wines gave the various former officials - who had given rather frank statements to Kadane - ample opportunities to weasel out of their embarrassing replies. Lydman had told Kadane that "oh, yes, absolutely," top embassy people had coordinated the release of the lists. Wines then printed his claim that this response was "absolutely not what I intended." Masters told Kadane, "Oh sure," they passed on the lists, adding, "We knew where the names were going," and later said, "I certainly wouldn't disagree with the fact that we had these lists, that we would use them to check off, ok, what's happening to the party." But Wines spent more space expounding on Masters's denial to the *Times* that he had any idea the lists were being used to round up people and kill them.

Doug Ireland speculates that the *Times* decided to "mug" Kadane because of embarrassment over being scooped by the Spartanburg, South Carolina, *Herald-Journal*, albeit a Times-owned paper. It is more likely, however, that the Wines piece is just what it seems to be: one more case of the *Times* cleansing and expunging from the record Company crimes. •

Interview Techniques

Ralph McGehee

*Editors' Note: Ralph McGehee served 25 years in the CIA before leaving to become one of its noted critics. He is the author of the bestselling *Deadly Deceits* (New York: Sheridan Square Press, 1983). He was interviewed by Michael Wines in connection with Wines's piece on the Kathy Kadane article, and wrote this comment for LOOT at our request. After some effort on his part, it was begrudgingly cleared for publication by the CIA, a burden Mr. McGehee must face whenever he writes.*

Mr. Wines's article in the *New York Times* of July 12, 1990, fails to record information I provided him about events in Indonesia in 1955-1966. His approach in interviewing me was not to ascertain the facts, but rather to attempt to disprove information in an article by Ms. Kadane of States News Service. Kadane's meticulous research and interviews contained explicit quotes from both CIA and State Department officials saying they prepared name lists of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) for the Indonesian military and checked off the names as the military murdered them. The assassinations were part of a genocide of between 250,000 to 1,000,000 people that began after junior military officers attempted a coup (called Gestapu) that killed six top military commanders and was blamed on the PKI. [Gestapu is the Suharto regime's acronym for the "September 30 Group," chosen for its sinister connotation - Editors.]

I advised Wines that providing names for the death squads is a standard operating procedure of CIA. Wines said

the Indonesian military knew how to find communists without American help. I then asked why the CIA did this universally and described such CIA operations in Vietnam where it compiled name lists of communists to be captured or killed by death squads. I referred to Thailand where I and fellow CIA cohorts compiled name lists of hundreds of communists and passed those to the Thai military. I cited current CIA operations where the Agency assists the Philippine military in gathering and compiling information on the Communist Party; the same in El Salvador.

Wines should have known of the CIA's operational history in trying to destroy the PKI and Sukarno - including election support to an opposition party in 1955, a massive paramilitary operation in 1958, plans to assassinate Sukarno in 1961, and finally in 1965-1966, successfully achieving its goal of destroying the PKI and Sukarno.

I told Wines that in 1981, I wrote an article for *The Nation* ("Foreign Policy By Forgery," April 11, 1981) that described the CIA's role in the Indonesia massacre and submitted it to the CIA for review. The CIA made extensive deletions proving my claims were valid. I told Wines about my lawsuits to force the CIA to release the deleted information - resulting in federal judges ruling that the Agency had "properly" classified details of its operation....

From my *Nation* article: "[Eight sentences deleted.] Indonesian military leaders [seven words deleted] began the massacre. The Agency wrote a secret study of what it did in Indonesia. [One sentence deleted from the 1981 article.] The CIA was pleased with its [one word deleted] and recommended it as a model for future operations [one-half sentence deleted]."

It is apparent to me that Wines, rather than reporting facts, tries to cover them up. •

Gruson on Guatemala: An Update

Edward S. Herman

In "Old Dictator Looks Better to Guatemala" (September 3, 1989, p. A6), and in several of his recent articles, Lindsey Gruson claims that the elected government of Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo, which had aroused great hopes, instead "has brought deep disillusionment, not just with the President but also with democracy" ("Voting Isn't Helping in Guatemala," June 3, 1990, p. E5). Human rights abuses again abound, the guerrilla movement is regrouping, and social reforms have not taken place. The people resent Cerezo's "failure to uproot the military's regimented control," and "today, civilian government exists largely in name."

The Failure of the (Non-existent) Democracy

But if the military was in control in 1984 and 1985, when the elections took place, how could they have been free, as *Times* coverage at the time suggested? Indeed, if Cerezo and elections failed to "uproot" military control, it follows that democracy was never established. Gruson never makes this logical deduction, nor does he question how military control *might* be reduced so that elections *could* be meaningful. In two articles on June 3, Gruson cites only people who castigate the "democracy," none who address the root of its failure (or its nonexistence).

Gruson's favorite source, cited at least five times in his series, is Edward Mulet, a conservative assemblyman and army apologist, whom he nevertheless quotes castigating Cerezo for failing to fulfill his promise of "an accounting for the disappeared and murdered" ("Political Violence on the Rise Again in Guatemala, Tarnishing Civilian Rule," June 28, 1990, p. A3). "If this is democracy," Millet says, "let's go to a military government" ("Voting Isn't Helping," June 3, 1990, p. 18). It is apparent why Gruson is fond of Millet: He attacks Cerezo while never asking whether the president ever had real authority. More importantly, he limits the choices to Cerezo or army rule. Gruson's other sources are largely V.S. and Guatemalan officials. Without providing any evidence, Gruson states that, "*many* [emphasis added] long for the stability of authoritarian government."

The Guerrillas

In "Guerrilla War in Guatemala Heats Up, Fueling Criticism of Civilian Rule" (June 3, 1990, p. A1), Gruson acknowledges that reform is badly needed in Guatemala and has been impossible to achieve under army rule, but he then portrays the resurgence of the guerrillas as a failure of *democracy*, quoting a western diplomat who complains: "Four years of democracy has allowed the guerrillas to regroup and rebuild."

Gruson fails to note that guerrillas have appeared regularly since 1954, "democracy" or not, which suggests their rise stems from the terrible conditions of a repressed majority. They are presented as a problem of administrative control, not as a pos-

sible solution to 36 years of terror. Gruson quotes a general: "We'll see an end of this subversion within a few years even if a few fanatics remain...." He also finds sources who explain the upsurge as a result of outside (Sandinista) aid, or perhaps a drug connection. His analysis is in striking contrast to his coverage of the contras in Nicaragua, where he found no sinister connotation to the massive outside (V.S.) aid. In short, Gruson and the *Times* apply a comprehensive double standard.

The U.S. Role in Guatemala

In his article of July 5, "U.S. Pins Hopes on Guatemalan Army" (p. A6), Gruson rewrites history and provides an uncritical reiteration of the official versions of the V.S. role. He states: "In Guatemala in 1954, the United States, concerned by what it perceived to be a growth of Communism in Guatemala under President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, helped build an opposition force led by Col. Carlos Castillo Armas that overthrew him." This is *Times* - not real - history. The supposed "Communist threat" emerged following the Guatemalan government's sanctioning of unions and an attempt at land reform. Gruson presents the nominal claim of concern by the U.S. as the real one. The U.S. did not just "help build" the invasion force. It initiated, organized, and financed it, and participated directly in the invasion. Gruson also fails to mention that the Arbenz government was elected, and that pluralism and democratic rule ended with its overthrow. In none of his four articles, does Gruson point out that the V.S. aided and trained the Guatemalan army and police from 1954 onward, and that in 1966 Green Berets were brought in. These policies consolidated army rule and paralleled the es-

Lindsey, Sidney, and Flora

The Gruson family has had a long history as *Times* reporters on Guatemala. Lindsey's father, Sidney Gruson, was described by fellow *Times* reporter Herbert Matthews as "God's gift to the United Fruit Company" for his warm tributes to the company and negative assessments of the Arbenz government in the early 1950s. However closely Sidney Gruson followed the government line in loyally describing the Arbenz government as a captive of the Reds, he still aroused the ire of the Dulles brothers because of his insistence on stressing the "fervent nationalism" of the Guatemalan and Latin opposition to U.S. policy in the area. The result was that Allen Dulles informed the *Times* that Gruson was politically unreliable, with "liberal leanings," and he was removed from reporting on the invasion of Guatemala. (See Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1982, pp. 88, 154-55.)

Sidney's wife, Lindsey Gruson's mother, Flora Lewis, was more dependable as an apologist for U.S. policy in Guatemala. Her article, "Ambassador Extraordinary: John Peurifoy," published in the *New York Times Magazine* July 18, 1954, was a puff piece for the arrogant bully who was the on-the-scene manager of the 1954 invasion. Schlesinger and Kinzer describe him as "no deep thinker," but he "understood how to scare a small country."

Wide World Photos



Sidney Gruson, dynastic head.



President Vinicio Cerezo, no longer Washington's cup of tea.

calation of state terrorism.

A real analysis of the U.S. role would be incompatible with parroting the official line of U.S. devotion to civilian rule. So, according to Gruson, the V.S. is "losing faith in the civilian government" and is turning to the military "to insure stability and combat growing drug trafficking." Gruson claims "the increasing American dependency on the Guatemalan military is a reversal of V nited States policies," a state-

ment based on the temporary suspension of U.S. military aid in 1976. It ignores the preceding 21 years during which the U.S. built up the army and police. And Gruson fails to mention that Israel stepped into the breach from 1976 as supplier and adviser, without U.S. protest. He even calls "the effort to improve the armed forces respect for human rights" one of the two "basic American policy goals" in Guatemala. In reality there is compelling evidence the army has been the prime instrument of V .S. policy there, and Gruson's obfuscation of this fact is a true indictment of his integrity as a news reporter.

The long V.S. role in building and making efficient the Guatemalan counterinsurgency state, while unmentioned, helps explain the Gruson-*Times* treatment of elections, democracy, the guerrillas, and the army itself. The *Times* calls for dismantling the Sandinista army in Nicaragua, yet it never suggests a need to dismantle the Guatemalan army, although Gruson chides Cerezo for his failure to cope with its "regimented control." The phony elections sponsored by the army in 1984 and 1985 were treated seriously by the *Times*, and Guatemala was then described as a democratic state with an elected government (again in contrast to Nicaragua).

In his June 3 article, "Voting Isn't Helping," Gruson admits there never was real democracy in Guatemala. His true achievement as a *Times* man is that, despite this admission, he attributes Guatemala's recent failures to a democracy which did not exist, rather than to the institutional conditions-put in place by the U.S.—which made democracy a joke. •

Witnesses "Vanish"

Jim Hamilton

Lindsey Gruson's May 7 *Times* story ("Crucial Evidence Vanishes in Case of 6 Slain Jesuits," p. A1) on the killings last November of six priests, their housekeeper, and her daughter by members of the Salvadoran military opens like this:

Jim Hamilton is a practicing physician in Santa Fe, New Mexico, who has an interest in Central American issues.

Several vital pieces of evidence that could help convict a colonel charged with the slaying of six Jesuit priests and two women in November have disappeared, the Salvadoran Supreme Court and judicial officials say.

Court authorities said at least four soldiers with potentially incriminating evidence were sent abroad to study and were unavailable to testify. Two other major witnesses have failed to appear as required, the officials said.

Senior judicial officials said the disappearance of the evidence and the four soldiers' transfer abroad *were a severe and possibly fatal blow* to an extremely weak case against the colonel. [Emphasis added.]

Nothing was said as to where the four soldiers had been sent. A call to Gruson's San Salvador office the morning of May 7 revealed that three of the four were at Fort Benning, Georgia.

A follow-up article by Gruson on May 9 ("Salvador Vows New Push in Jesuit Case," p. A3) repeated the essentials of the earlier accounts and in the second to last paragraph, with respect to the four soldiers, noted: "Three are receiving training at Fort Benning, Ga. and one in Panama, a traditional part of the curriculum for third-year cadets."

A *Times* editorial on May 10 (p. A32) on the killings remarked simply that "key witnesses have been sent abroad."

In a story on the first page of the May 13 "Week in Review" covering the same topic, James LeMoyne, in referring to a recently-released report by 19 House Democrats, wrote:

The Congressmen found that, like other political murders involving Salvadoran army officers, judicial progress on the Jesuits' case is at a standstill, with crucial evidence missing and no attempt made to investigate whether other senior officers may have been involved in the killings.

The report also throws a harsh light on the conduct of the American Embassy in El Salvador. Embassy officials leaked to the army high command the name of the only officer in the army who was willing to come forward to charge that a senior officer had ordered the murders. The embassy then undercut the testimony of the only known witness to the murders - whose account has proved to be highly accurate.

No mention whatever was made by LeMoyne of the four soldier-witnesses and their whereabouts.

The behavior of the American Embassy described above notwithstanding, if the Bush administration is seriously concerned with bringing those responsible for the killings to justice, one would think that it would do everything possible to see that the investigation was carried out as quickly and as effectively as possible. This would include that the State Department and the Pentagon not permit crucial witnesses to come to this country - and stay here - before they had been adequately deposed at home. By omitting this aspect entirely from his front-page article and only acknowledging two days later on page three that three of the soldiers were actually at Fort Benning, Gruson, in effect, helps dilute the impact and significance of this information as do the subsequent editorial and LeMoyne's piece. •

G.E. Farben?

Brian Tenenbaum

A 1986 congressional committee report implicated General Electric in human experimentation for tritium absorption. Tritium is one of two radioactive isotopes of hydrogen, and is often handled by workers at nuclear power plants. The *New York Times* early edition October 24, 1986, made brief mention of GE's role. Near the end of the article Matthew Wald wrote, "The tritium study was financed by the Atomic Energy Commission and conducted by the General Electric Company at Richland, which abuts the Hanford [nuclear weapons] reservation." The same story in the late edition dropped the reference to GE, and ended the sentence after the word "Commission."

LOOT Reader Discovers the Change

A LOOT reader, Noemie Vassilakis, discovered the change several months ago and, disturbed by the deletion from the edition which is preserved on microfilm, wrote to the *Times* on January 3, 1990 (and sent another copy on February 13, after no reply). The ensuing correspondence is quite interesting.

Wald's response of February 26 notes that his aim was to "put the onus on the Atomic Energy Commission." General Electric's role was "probably as general contractor," and it "would probably have supervised the execution of any experiment that the Atomic Energy Commission wanted done." But this effort to "put the onus" on the commission seems also an effort to excuse GE, which was profiting from its willingness to immerse people in tritium.

Ms. Vassilakis replied on March 16 that she did not find Wald's response reassuring, that indeed she found bias at the *Times* in favor of corporate interests which caused her to lose trust in the paper. This prompted senior editor William Borders to reply for Wald and for the paper on March 28, "It distresses us both that this episode has led to the loss of your trust in the *Times*," he said. "Our integrity is, ultimately, the only thing we have, and we treasure it." He insisted that "no corporation - or

any other outside interest - can exert the kind of influence that you imagine GE exerted in this case. It simply does not happen." "I assure you," he concluded, "that whoever edited the article, adding some material and deleting other material, was influenced solely by journalistic judgments, and not at all concerned with GE's sensibilities."

Unsatisfied, Ms. Vassilakis reminded Borders on April 9 that "the edited material - less than one line - was too short to have saved any space in the article, and too significant to have been deleted for stylistic considerations." How, she wondered, could he "equate absolutely the integrity of the *Times* with that of its employees" and be so positive that there could not be a single unscrupulous person in the organization?

Borders's reply of April 19, the last communication in this saga, is revealing. He skips integrity and apologizes for GE, just what Ms. Vassilakis suspected was going on in the first place. His letter reads, in its entirety:

You and I have a different idea of the scruples of our editors. But that's not really relevant to this discussion. The larger point is that the company was doing what it did at the behest of the Government, and that fact was a prominent feature of the coverage.

Mr. Borders is evidently unfamiliar with the Nuremberg trials against I.G. Farben, Krupp, and the other German companies that were just doing what they did at the behest of their government.

Callous Environmentalists

Environmentalists can have a hard time making their case in news magazine reports on the current Clean Air Act debate in Washington. They want a stronger law to reduce cancers and other air-pollution-related diseases, but Steven Roberts, a former *New York Times* reporter, completely ignored them and their case in a *U.S. News & World Report* article that ran more than two pages ("The Clean Air Sweepstakes," April 16, 1990, pp. 22-24).

In *Newsweek*, Rich Thomas managed to make environmentalists look callous. A Senate bill, he wrote, "would shut down many plants and could result in layoffs for tens of thousands of workers - yet environmental groups have already branded it a sellout." ("Big Stink Over a New Law," April 9, 1990, p. A2). In *Time*, Otto Friedrich opined that, while those opposed to stricter laws may juggle figures to show how vast the costs of such regulations can be, "environmentalists have different ways of manipulating numbers." To prove this, he said that a Sierra Club official "points to a government study saying that air pollution causes 50,000 premature deaths annually." With no apparent credentials of his own to judge this report, nor with any stated reason to question its accuracy, Friedrich seemed to dismiss the report as "manipulation" ("Scrubbing the Skies," April 16, 1990, pp. 20-21).

- Jim Sibbison

Kid Gloves for GE

When GE was found guilty of cheating the army in a federal trial in February, the *New York Times* ignored the story in its main news columns. *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, by contrast, gave the story front-page coverage (Lacy McFarley and Joseph A. Slobodzian, "GE Guilty in Army Fraud Case," February 3, 1990). With the imposition of penalties in late July, the *Times* finally gave the case front-page attention, but the quality of its coverage is interesting. The headline reads, "GE Agrees to Pay \$16.1 Million Fine For Pentagon Fraud" (Barnaby J. Feder, July 27, 1990). It makes the payment virtually an act of generosity by GE and avoids the use of the word criminal. It is hard to imagine the *Times* saying that a pornographer or terrorist "agreed" to pay a fine or go to jail. The *Wall Street Journal's* front page lead in its column "What's News" starts: "GE was ordered [emphasis added] to pay" and its inside article is entitled "GE Is Fined \$10 Million in Criminal [emphasis added] Case" (Milo Geyelin and Beatrice E. Garcia, July 27, 1990, p. 85). The *Times* is indeed kind to GE.

- Edward S. Herman

Central America Spiked

Richard McKerrow

For a journalist hoping to drop anchor in Central America for any of the leading U.S. or British newspapers, the future looks bleak. Inquiries about possible openings as a correspondent in that "troubled" region are greeted with the almost unanimous explanation that as a news item, Central America is now moribund. An editor from the *Financial Times* summarized the mood most succinctly: "The Central American situation is winding down."

Other foreign editors responded with alarming similarity, talking about "world news" as if it were some phenomenon that orbits beyond their control and indicating their intentions to shift resources to Europe. An editor at the *Boston Globe* spoke of diminishing work for journalists in Central America and said a stringer in El Salvador would not get much more than a "rice bowl's" worth of work.

The *Globe* used to run Douglas Farah's dispatches from that country until his employer, the *Washington Post*, sent him to cover the so-called drug war in Colombia. As Central America vanishes from the media map, here looms one of the new Latin-American hot spots, along with Peru and Bolivia.

Most of the coverage from this part of the globe confines itself to a portrayal of the Andean area as the latest "Beirut" (a term previously reserved for depicting the Salvadoran situation), where drug barons and leftwing guerrillas besiege the local populace, while the government remains the imperiled center. It is the old story of "extremes of left and right," updated with the predictable moral supplied by a *Times* editorialist on July 7 that what is needed is a "tough military strategy" (p. 22).

Of course it is exactly this "strategy" that has been in place, with army regulars moonlighting in the deadly service of the drug lords against peasants and workers, following a pattern that has become depressingly familiar. The next chapter in this story will concern the extent of U.S. military involvement, and though the *Times* editorial assured its readers that fears of another Vietnam are "unwarranted," about a week later *Newsweek* ran its exclusive report on how Gen. Maxwell Thurman would like to repeat "Operation Just Cause" in the Andes with a "simultaneous [regional] attack to impact the cartel's entire support structure" (July 16, 1990).

"Another Central America"

So we are seeing the emergence of "another Central America." All the more reason to push the real one out of sight, where the bloodletting persists. "Torture, killings, and 'disappearances' continue to be committed with impunity in El Salvador," according to a June 24 Amnesty International press release, but you would not know it from reading the pages of the mainstream American press, which apart from information about the latest piece of missing evidence in the Jesuit case, has barely mentioned El Salvador in recent months. So far this year there have been less than half as many stories in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*, as there were in

the final three months of 1989. There was an article in the *Times* July 27 about the recent agreement between the Salvadoran government and the FMLN for the UN. to investigate human rights abuses, but here Lindsey Gruson explained how "the level of abuses has dropped dramatically since the early 1980s" (p. 2). This is vintage Gruson. By deploying the horrors of the early 80s as a yardstick, we are expected to celebrate the "receding level of violence,"

In recent weeks Gruson has been in Guatemala filing stories about the increased level of human rights abuses there. Such words from Gruson are surprising only until you realize that they follow the U.S. administration's own denunciation of the deteriorating human rights situation in that country; in both cases the role of the army is minimized while the hapless Cerezo takes the fall. It is no secret that the State Department would like to install a president in Guatemala at the September elections who is even more pliable than Cerezo.

The prevailing quiet on Central America, interrupted only by skewed coverage of strikes in Nicaragua and the above-mentioned dispatches from Guatemala, demonstrates how the media's concerns are defined by U.S. interests which are, as Noam Chomsky observed in an April 3 speech at MIT, "to keep the stranglehold there, put them on the back burner for a while, while we turn to Eastern Europe and try to impel it towards the Latin American model." The media's dismissal of Central America conceals the continuing strangulation of the region by the U.S. and also presupposes that Central Americans have forsaken the struggle, an assumption that is clearly untrue.

The Salvadoran government's refusal to offer serious concessions at the UN.-supervised peace talks in the face of FMLN compromises has triggered discussions about another "offensive for peace." There are also signs of the emergence of a broad coalition opposed to the oligarchic-military elite in El Salvador. In the May 1 demonstrations, U.S.-funded centrist unions marched with leftist unions for the first time in recent Salvadoran history. The revival of the insurgent movement in Guatemala and the militancy of strikers in Nicaragua demonstrates that the struggle is far from over. In fact the May Day marches in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras were the largest in ten years, and only by ignoring such events can the mainstream media depict Central America as a dead story.

Reuters/Bellmann



Huey helicopters, part of U.S. aid to Colombia, are unloaded from C-5 Military Airlift Command cargo plane, allegedly part of "war on drugs."

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Knights of the Living Dead

Alexander Cockburn
with Richard McKerrow

Friday, June 29, 1990, the *New York Times* ran a photograph with its lead editorial, not something that happens very often. The half-tone displayed a jubilant contra flanking Cardinal Obando y Bravo and President Violeta Chamorro. The headline read, "The Contra War, 1981- 1990."

The idea presumably being that nothing is truly dead until the *Times* has officially announced it, the editorial ended with the sentence, "But now, with the moment frozen above [*i.e.*, the photo of contra, Chamorro, and man of God], this war is over." The thesis here is that the United States helped engineer "reconciliation" and now, with a "democratic Nicaragua" secured by the February election, the contras will fade away, like Lewis Carroll's cat.

Within two weeks of the *Times's* photograph, contras were in the streets of Managua helping to orchestrate attacks upon striking students and workers. In its coverage of the violence of July 10 and 11 the *Times* mentioned neither the presence of contras nor the identities of the individuals killed, saying the confrontations had been between "armed Sandinistas and pro-Government demonstrators."

The photograph in the *Times* was from Agence France Presse, which refuses to sell its photos to *LOOT*, or anyone else whose politics it dislikes. This virtually identical shot was purchased from Impact Visuals.

Perhaps the *Times* man on the spot, Mark Uhlig, was more preoccupied with a wound to his arm than with identifying combatants. With this vexation added to the foot permanently lodged in his mouth, the hapless *Times* man must present an affecting spectacle. Here at *LOOT*, far from the field of battle we heard indirectly from Americans in Managua that contra leader Ruben had been conspicuously involved. From England the July 12 *Guardian* reported "former contra fighters exchanging fire with supporters of the opposition Sandinista Front."

The *Guardian* also noted that "the recent deaths include four strikers murdered in the Ciudad Sandino satellite of Managua on Monday, and a student shot through the head in a machine gun attack in Managua on Friday night. The leader of the National Farmers Union was murdered north of Matagalpa on Monday and another killing was reported in Corinto."

Contras are clustered in "demobilization" zones, where they can easily be mobilized. It also seems possible that U.S. Am-

Enrique Marti, Impact Visuals



bassador Harry Schlaudeman, a veteran of both the 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic and the 1973 coup in Chile, working as a State Department official in both countries, offered Chamorro 2,500 troops if necessary. Vice President Virgilio Godoy called for U.S. intervention and was put in his place by Chamorro. But her government, the more it retreats in the face of Sandinista militancy,

the sooner it will find that U.S. favor can be short-lived if Schlaudeman and his masters in Washington deem that altogether too much "reconciliation" is going on.

The editorial in the *Times* said Washington had been "ensnared in horrors like assassination manuals, the clandestine mining of Nicaraguan harbors, and the still-reverberating Iran-contra scandal." This is like some old Nazi editorialist on the newspaper *Das Reich* saying that Germany was "ensnared" in the second world war and accompanying war crimes.

Lies Of Our Times

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SECOND CLASS